Miami's game studies minor gaining momentum

Program views digital games as a mix of art, science and education.

By Lauren Hetzel
Contributing Writer

OXFORD — Miami University's digital game studies program has been named one of the top 50 game design programs by the Princeton Review and GamePro magazine.

The Princeton Review surveyed 500 schools in the U.S. and Canada this academic year for the quality of the curriculum, faculty, facilities and infrastructure, as well as data on scholarships, financial aid and career opportunities.

Miami is growing its game studies minor with efforts to integrate within the university's educational community.

Among those spearheading the effort, Lindsay Grace, an Armstrong Institute of Interactive Media Studies assistant professor at Miami,

Matt Gay cracks a smile Tuesday, Feb. 23, in Sean Duncan's games and learning class at Miami University. Staff photo by Gary Stelzer

is taking a proactive approach to expanding the minor and its recognition among the student body.

"What's really changed is the amount of momentum behind it," Grace said.

A new course on the design of play is in the works for next semester and others are in development for the future. Miami recently hired two faculty members specializing in games and a third will join the department in the fall.

The game studies minor views games as a combination of art, science and education.

It exists within the AIMS program, which also offers a major in interactive media studies and a minor in interactive media.

The program recently expanded, adding four classes to the minor, creating a track system: Game Studies, Game Art, Game Programming and Game Design.

Beginning students do need basic skills and must pass a test on programs like Photoshop. They start with a game studies class and a class on the design of play, which blends education, psychology, art and a splash of pop culture media. Students then follow their own interest in one of four tracks.

As part of his plan to increase the game studies minor, Grace secured Miami as one of the locations for the Global Game Jam.

The Global Game Jam is a 48-hour international game design and development event located in various countries, with the goal of creating an educational experience for participants and the potential for the next generation in computer games.

The event at Miami drew students from the game studies minor and others from throughout Ohio, ranging in age from 15 to 33, who were just interested in creating computer games rapidly.

As he prepares to create the first advertising game studio at Miami, Grace assures "people will probably be hearing a lot more about gamers at Miami."

>> **Students help create games in 48 hours**